

Pet Deathcare

a new way to serve your community

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How did you react and what did you say the last time someone in your community asked you to provide guidance and assistance in response to the death of their pet? Undoubtedly you have faced this dilemma at some point in the past, so, are you prepared today to meet the future needs of your pet-loving clientele the next time you're asked, "My pet has died, can you please help me?" Will you be able to respond with confidence and serve the members of your community with compassion and dignity when called upon to provide pet deathcare products and services?

THE REALITY OF PETS DYING

Those who are fortunate enough to own and love a pet know that their households would seem empty and their lives would be incomplete without the special presence and unconditional love of their devoted animal companions; that's why the death of a beloved pet is an extremely painful and stressful life event. With deeper introspection, we can certainly understand why the reference of "putting a pet to sleep" when it is either injured or ill beyond reasonable medical intervention is so commonly accepted. The emotional and psychological responses that people have when a pet dies are much like those experienced at the death of a family member or dear friend. It is no surprise, therefore, that the grief and bereavement processes are similar as well.

OUR DEATHCARE PROFESSION

Your work is all about guiding people through some of life's most difficult transitions; the reality is, people die and pets die, yet life goes on because professionals like you are always there to help. **Funeral directors, as compassionate, progressive and full-service deathcare providers, should seize the opportunity to broaden their community outreach, raise their firm's profile and increase their business revenues by presenting their clientele unique products and specialized services in response to the death of pets.** Perhaps you know from personal experience that the years shared with a pet are full of endless joy, enduring enchantment and unconditional love. Our work is all about helping you be prepared to provide the members of your community with proper and dignified care of their pets following death.

STATISTICS SHOW A BIG MARKET

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook, 2002, researchers analyzed surveys completed by more than 54,000 individuals out of 80,000 U.S. households selected randomly to investigate pet ownership trends. The survey polled respondents on companion animals living in their households during 2001 including dogs, cats, pet birds, horses, fish, ferrets and rabbits. The following are among some of the AVMA's findings:

- Half of all U.S. households own dogs, cats or both
- There are 69 million cats in 31.6 percent of all U.S.

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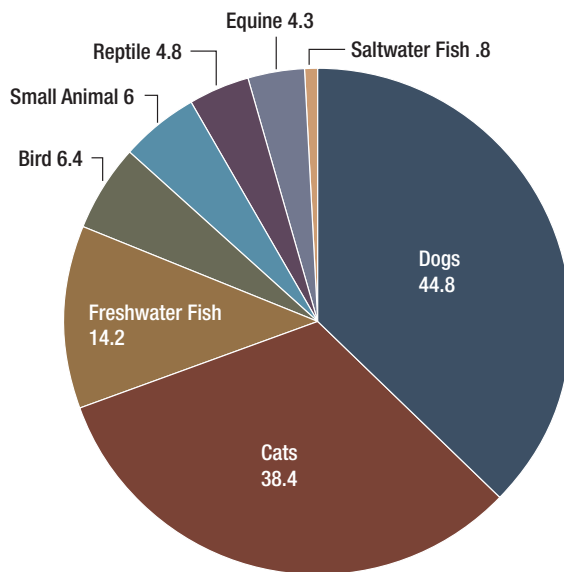


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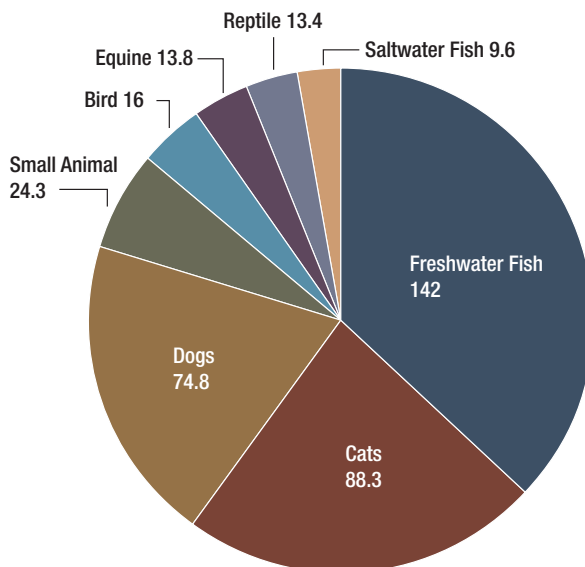
- There are 62 million dogs in 36.1 percent of all U.S. households
- 58.3 percent of all U.S. households owned at least one pet during 2001
- Dog and cat populations increased significantly from 1996 to 2001; dogs by 16.5 percent and cats by 16.6 percent
- Multiple-pet ownership is common; the majority of pet-owning households (60 percent) had more than one pet.

The American Pet Products Manufacturers Association's National Survey 2007-08, reports that 63 percent of U.S. households own a pet, which equates to 71.1 million homes. The latest breakdowns:

Number of U.S. Households that Own a Pet (millions)



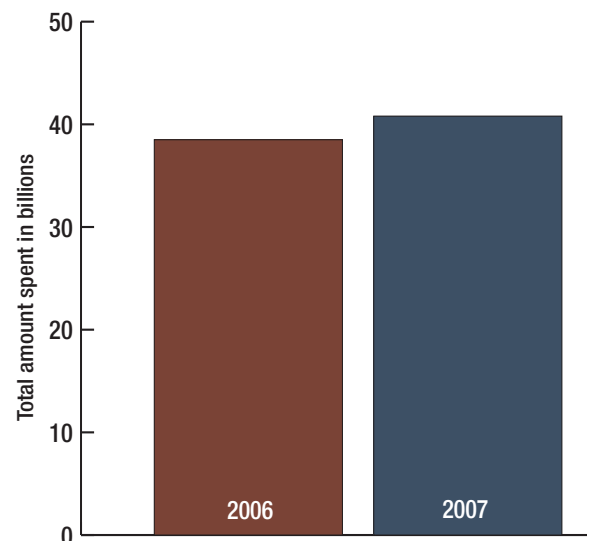
Total Number of Pets Owned in the U.S. (millions)



YOUR PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AID PET OWNERS

In most situations, the death of a pet is the result of euthanasia under the care of a veterinarian generally following an illness or injury. The pet owner decides whether the animal will be cremated or buried. If cremation is the preferred choice, the veterinarian generally arranges the cremation process and the cremated remains of the animal are returned to its owner. If burial is desired, the body of the animal is returned to its owner by the veterinarian. The choice, of course, is a very personal one for the pet owner, but in either case, you should be prepared to respond with compassion and dignity when called upon. Providing a selection of urns, caskets and a variety of other remembrance products designed for the final disposition and memorialization of pets is an important part of the pet deathcare process. In addition to having the appropriate products on hand, you should also be prepared to offer helpful suggestions and a list of community resources for the many types of services that could be held in honor of pets; perhaps you may choose to offer those types of services and resources at your facility and under your direction. It's also good to have a list of locations for the final disposition of pets bearing in mind any prevailing ordinances and regulations regarding such disposition. Many parts of the country have pet cemeteries; you should know if there are any in your service area. Perhaps you operate in a jurisdiction that permits funeral directors to own and operate pet cremation facilities and/or pet cemeteries; if so, those opportunities allow you to serve your community with a broader range of pet deathcare choices.

Total U.S. Pet Industry Expenditures (billions)



Source: American Pet Products Manufacturers Association

MAKING THE SALES CONNECTION

You may wonder whether marketing pet memorialization products and services poses a challenge. How do you offer products for pets as well as people without causing offense? Obviously, there's a difference between people and pets, but that hasn't presented a problem to funeral home owners who wish to provide families a dignified means to remember their pets and lay them to rest.

There has been some debate over what kind of approach to take in presenting the public with pet memorialization options. Some argue for creation of a separate (but nearby) facility or channeling pet memorialization traffic in the funeral home to a defined, separate area. Others have discovered that the public isn't as sensitive to the separation issue as many expect.

Displaying human and pet products together hasn't been a problem for two funeral home owners in opposite parts of the country. One shows pet caskets in a corner of his casket display room (pet caskets' smaller size and figurine ornamentation easily distinguish them). The closest thing to a negative reaction is an occasional snicker from a non-pet owner. The funeral home owner, who's been selling items for more than 10 years, simply explains that the pet products are a service for people who consider pets a member of the family.

Those with pets often remember the pet memorialization products from their visit to the funeral home to make arrangements for a family member. Funeral home owners have seen wives and husbands give each other a nudge and say "look at that" and make a mental note of the products. (That mental

note is enhanced by a product brochure they can pick up on their way out of the funeral home.)

Another funeral home owner in the pet memorialization product business for five years also sees human and pet products as peacefully coexisting. At his facility, human and pet urns are displayed together. (Pet urns bear images of cats or dogs.) The mixed display is a conversation starter for visitors making arrangements for family members. It turns out that many have the cremated remains of a pet in a cardboard box at home and suddenly realize they can replace that container with something much nicer. "Oh, that's interesting," they'll say about the pet urns. "I have a dog (or cat) at home...while I'm here I'll buy one of those."

(Tip: Look for customers who live in apartment-style residences. They may be good prospects for pet urns because they don't have a back yard in which to bury a pet.)

Pet owners, generally, seem to be unaware of the memorialization options available to them – from a wide variety of urns and caskets, photo keepsakes, memorials and headstones. Another funeral home owner also advises against hiding pet memorialization options and instead integrates them into the funeral home's marketing in a low-key way. Discreet signs within the funeral home can express your support for families who have lost a pet and suggest there's a way to celebrate the pet's memory.

Making educational brochures available to families visiting your home is an effective way to market your pet deathcare products and services. Have the brochures describe the many different options families have – pet memorialization services and arrangements, plus memorial products.

SURVEY MEASURES LARGE DEMAND FOR PET PRODUCTS

When people learn about these products, they will buy them. A survey by the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association found that an average of one out of 10 dog and cat owners would purchase an urn for his or her pet upon its death. About 10 percent of owners on average would buy a headstone for their pet. These numbers translate to almost 20 million urns and 12.5 million headstones that will be purchased for both dogs and cats combined upon their death, the association estimates.

About 3 percent of dog and cat owners expressed interest in purchasing a casket, a smaller percentage than in the past. The association speculated that the change was due to a strong, growing interest in urns, which are five times more popular than caskets for dogs and more than twice as popular for cats. Strongest interest in dog urns was in the South

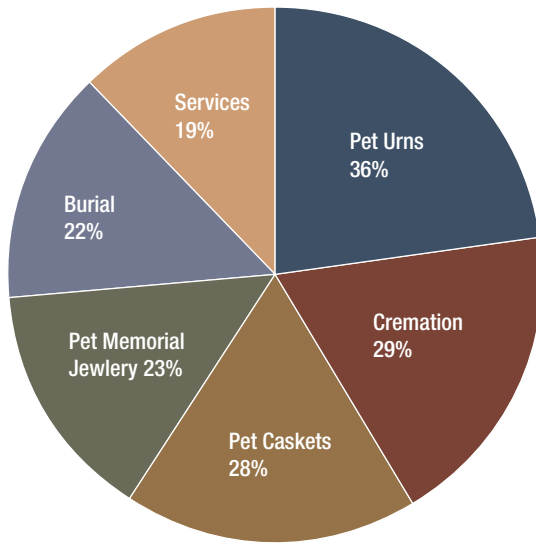


and cat urns in the Northeast. By the way, dog and cat owners were about equal in sadness over the death of their pet.

Not only is there more interest among the public for pet memorialization products and services, an increasing number of funeral home owners are tapping that market for direct sales and the benefits of establishing a relationship that may result in future arrangements for human members of the family.

An unscientific April 2007 American Funeral Director poll found that almost a third of 78 respondents already provide pet memorialization services at their firms. The services offered in order of popularity are:

Popularity of Memorialization Services & Products



Source: American Funeral Director

Perhaps the most interesting indicator of the future of pet memorialization is that 23 percent of respondents said they aren't in the business now but plan to introduce these products and services in the next year; 38 percent plan to do so in the next two to five years.

Why such a strong interest? An impressive 78 percent said they feel that the pet memorial business is an "appropriate ancillary project for a funeral director/cemeterian." Moreover, 77 percent see it as a growth business and 44 percent agreed it's an "important part" of the funeral services industry.

REACHING PET OWNERS

Obviously, one of the most effective ways for you to market pet memorialization products is to make their availability known to families visiting your facility to make arrangements for human services. And then hope for word-of-mouth marketing to

follow.

But there are more proactive ways to generate interest in pet memorialization products.

Advertising. Here is one area where some funeral directors exercise caution in associating their funeral home name with pet memorialization products and services. Whether it's advertising in display ads or local cable channels, they avoid using the name of their funeral home, instead giving only a phone number to call "when your pet dies."

Web site. Adding a "pet services" item to the navigation bar of your web site, however, doesn't raise such concerns. Your web site is an environment you control completely and a place where you have the space to address the perception and nuances of pet memorialization.

Referrals. Because most pets die at a veterinarian office or animal hospital, establishing a relationship with vets and humane societies offers a source of new customers for your funeral home. Having the pet owner visit your facility can be the first step in a new relationship. A funeral home owner who has sold caskets, urns and jewelry for several years estimates that one in 10 traditional funeral services at his facility have come from someone who has purchased a pet memorialization product.

CASE STUDY: ENTERING THE PET REMEMBRANCE MARKET

Looking for a way to further serve its community, Lester R. Grummons Funeral Home in Oneonta, N.Y., recently began offering pet memorialization products. The staff occasionally had received questions about handling remains of recently deceased pets. They also saw the need for helping people deal with pet loss when their own family members' pets died. During the funeral home's research, an article in the February 2007 American Funeral Director on pet loss services spurred additional interest.

Grummons went with Kelco Supply Co.'s Quiesco Pet Remembrance Products because they were "dignified and practical," according to Grummons' Chuck Striker, a funeral director for 11 years. The funeral home shows about 30 different Kelco memorialization products on a three-tier display in the same room as human urns. The display has received nothing but positive feedback, including from clergy. People visiting the funeral home to make arrangements for family members see the items and say "Wow, we can get things like that for pets?," Striker recalls.

What first catches their eye are the dog paw prints on urns. They're also struck by photo memorials, granite markers, casts of paw prints and The Rainbow Bridge memorial which incorporates a pet



photo next to tribute text, which can be framed. People become inquisitive. It gets them thinking about ways to memorialize their pets. “Pets are part of the family and people feel that loss,” Striker says. Pet deathcare gives funeral directors an additional opportunity to apply their professional expertise in helping grieving people. “Our big motivator is serving the community – whichever community. It’s just reaching out.”

Initially, Grummons relied on such interest for word-of-mouth marketing. But the funeral home also let the local humane society (which cremates pets) know about the products because people ask the organization about alternatives to cardboard boxes for their pets’ cremains; Grummons’ staff members plan to talk to area veterinarians, too. A press release announced availability of the new service for the community and noted that Grummons Funeral Home was the only funeral home in its area offering pet remembrance products. It’s also adding a “Pet Loss” page to its web site where Grummons will list all the memorial items and their prices.

“I can’t wait to get this on our web site and get this thing going,” Striker says. “I can’t wait to see how this is going to take off.”



CONCLUSION

It’s been said often, and it is true: People regard their pets as members of the family. They experience grief and loss when their pets die. Funeral home owners’ sensitivity to such situations puts them in a position to help this grieving process. They can educate pet owners in the many ways they can cherish the memory of their pets in a dignified manner. Pet remembrance products, such as Kelco’s new line of Quiesco urns, caskets, headstones, markers and photo keepsakes, provide a practical way for funeral home owners to fulfill that need and serve their community in a new way.

ABOUT KELCO

Quiesco is a Latin word that translates as “to sleep”, “to rest”, “to be at home.” It’s an exotic and unfamiliar word that evokes the ordinary comforts of hearth and home and reminds us of the simple pleasures that the good life has to offer. Quiesco™, Pet Remembrance Products by Kelco® is specially designed for you. You now have resources to use in establishing and supporting a successful, product-oriented pet deathcare program right in your funeral home. Kelco Supply Company, a trusted name and industry leader in the deathcare profession since 1939, developed a “pet-themed” augmentation to its line of human cremation urns and related products more than 10 years ago. That line of pet deathcare products has been well received and continues to be very successful in both the veterinary and pet cemetery professions. Kelco now introduces its Quiesco™, Pet Remembrance Products by Kelco® line to the deathcare profession. For complete details, contact Kelco at 1-800-328-7720 or to view a product catalog go to www.petremembranceproducts.com. •